

ARE YOU READY TO BRING IT?

The sheer fact of you reading this article tells me you take your job seriously. You seek out information via writings, table top discussions and last but not least training. I would wager in the last 30 days you have pulled multiple tank lines, hooked a hydrant, laddered buildings in your first in, discussed ventilation, pumped the engine and put up the aerial. But I ask you? When is the last time you hopped on the treadmill, grabbed a radio and jogged around the fire house, did some push ups, sit ups or pull ups? When is the last time you consistently exercised?

I enjoy reading articles written by those that have been on the job for awhile. You know the ones that start out, "In my twenty years of fighting fire". That statement alone makes me want to train. I have been around the fitness field for twenty years and it has taken me many places. I would like to share some things I have discovered "In my twenty years of working out", that can hopefully fully prepare you to bring it!

1. **Keep it simple** (Three Major Components of Fitness):

- A. Cardio Vascular Training: Walk Run, Bike, or Hike.
- B. Resistance Training: Push Ups, Sit Ups, Pull Ups, Lift weights.
- C. Flexibility: Stretch or Yoga.

Most of us work ten days a month so there is no excuse not to train ten days a month. 30 minutes of cardio vascular training, 20 minutes of resistance training and 10 minutes of flexibility is a great start.

Example: Walk on the treadmill/outside for 30 Min. I like to increase the incline to increase the intensity, but also helps decrease the impact on my joints. Immediately after, begin a circuit of push ups, sit ups, pull ups, air squats or walking lunges. Shoot for four rounds of the above slowly increasing the total repetitions of each as they become less difficult. Finish off with some slow stretches holding each movement for 20-30 seconds.

2. Be consistent:

Do not let days, weeks, or months go by with out exercising. These days we all carry daily planners. Use the planner to track your last work out. Be as detailed as you like, but I personally write down the major muscle groups trained as it is very easy to forget. My routine is broken down into 4 work outs:

- A. Chest Tris
- B. Shoulders
- C. Legs
- D. Back/Bis

I do not allow more than nine days to pass without performing each routine so if I train Mon, Tues, Wed, and Thur, performing the above routine I would have until Wed of the following week to start the routine over again. No excuses, no whining, get it done.

3. Set Goals:

We all have different sources of motivation. Whether it be physical (bench press/mile run/single person 35 perhaps?), physiological (lower your Blood pressure/lower your cholesterol), and probably the biggest motivator of all, psychological. (Vanity/lower your body fat %/ Improve how you perceive your self in the mirror/ have your clothes fit better/ increase your confidence level/ and perhaps become a little more enticing to the opposite sex) Bottom line, being in shape benefits you in the bedroom as well!!!

No matter what motivates you being in shape will pay dividends on the fire ground; you cannot argue that fact, nuff said.

4. Push yourself:

Fighting Fire is intense therefore your workouts should be intense. Sport specificity.....train like you fight and fight like you train. Working out is not rocket science, (I would be out for sure) but it is not easy either. How many rocket scientists are in shape? I do not care what method you use to train, run, walk, bike, and hike, lift weights or throw ladders. Push yourself a little harder each time and in the long run it will benefit you.

5. Change it up:

We have all been victims of the recliner, becoming stagnant and not pushing ourselves. How I overcome becoming complacent is to change my routine every two months. I pretty much perform the same four work outs I just do them in different manners.

A. Conditioning Phase:

Instead of resting for a minute between sets I jump rope for a minute. E.g. perform a set of bench, then jump rope for a minute, set a bench again, jump rope for a minute again, and so on.

B. Super set phase:

Take a certain body part and perform multiple exercises for said body part. E.g. perform a set of pull ups followed by set of pull downs. Rest a minute and do it again.

C. Strength Phase:

Increase your weight used, decrease your reps, and increase your rest.

Knowing I only have two months to perform each phase keeps me making those trips to the gym. Just as I become tired of a certain phase, I change it up to the next one revitalizing myself.

The above suggestions are ways I have kept myself motivated to constantly improve physically over the last twenty years. Whether it was sports in high school, performing at the NCAA Nationals in Track and Field receiving All American honors, to performing my fire ground duties at the intense level required. Training has helped me physically and psychologically overcome many barriers in my life. I hope you can take something from this article to help you begin or reestablish your journey in the fitness world.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT...

You are on scene of a two story single family residential structure with heavy fire coming from the C/D corner. You lead in wet and your attack line is stretched. Truck splits, two to the roof, two inside, your Back-Up fire fighter humps hose till the Nozzlemen and Captain are at the seat of the fire. Ladders are being thrown, chain saws roaring, salvage covers are deployed, and ceiling is being pulled. Where are you? On the front lawn after your first bottle, jacket open, sucking wind? OR...Mask on getting your bottle changed by the Medics on scene **READY TO BRING IT?**